

In response to the drought and the Governor’s Executive Order B-29-15, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) is developing the Turf Replacement Initiative. The Turf Replacement Initiative consists of three integrated program components:

- ## 1. RESIDENTIAL TURF REBATE PROGRAM

Figure 1
Targeted Counties

Targeted San Joaquin Valley Counties

The map shows the following targeted counties in blue: Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, Kern, and Santa Clara.

of replaced turf capped at 1000 square feet, with a maximum rebate of \$2,000 per household residential landscape. Proposed specifications are listed in Attachment A.

REBATE ADMINISTRATION

Rebate applicants will interface directly with EGIA. EGIA will review the application, determine eligibility per DWR specifications, and provide the rebate after completion of the landscape conversion. EGIA will provide periodic updates and a final report to DWR regarding the progress and any issues associated with the rebate program. DWR will provide EGIA with program administrative costs.

A local agency that does not have an existing program may partner with DWR in the State program. The local agency can contract directly with EGIA to establish its own turf rebate program in concert with the State program.

Applicants may receive the State rebate in addition to existing local rebates as long as the applicant meets the specifications for the State program. As such, the State program will supplement rather than replace existing local turf rebate programs.

2. COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL (CII) PROGRAM

Similar to the Residential Rebate Program, the CII turf removal and replacement program will focus on CII facilities in the underserved drought-stricken communities of the San Joaquin Valley (see Figure 1). The program, as proposed, will include the following components:

1. *California Conservation Corps. Partnership* - DWR will work with CCC to deliver the removal and direct install of the CII turf replacement program.
2. *Materials Funding* –DWR will provide funds for plants and materials to the CCC.
3. *Design Funding* – DWR may provide landscape design assistance to CII entities approved for the CCC partnership program which do not have the resources or time to prepare a landscape design.

3. STATEWIDE CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE DROUGHT TOLERANT LANDSCAPES

Concurrent with implementation of both the Residential Rebate and the CII programs, DWR in coordination with will lead a statewide campaign to publicize the rebate initiative, to communicate the benefits and importance of converting lawn to drought tolerant landscapes, and guidance on how to do it. Coordination and alignment of the three programs is critical to the success of each and reinforces consistent water efficiency messaging. Implementation of the Residential Rebate and CII programs will be coordinated with media events and Save Our Water (SOW) to support the statewide campaign.

In addition, DWR envisions a partnership with other State, regional, and local agencies, as well as non-profits and other entities to promote turf conversion to drought tolerant landscapes across the state.

The Statewide Campaign is intended to raise awareness and provide information to residential and commercial, industrial and institutional customers on the multiple benefits of drought tolerant landscapes. Specific activities will include outreach, community engagement and technical support for public participation in landscape conversion events.

FINANCING OF THE TURF REPLACEMENT INITIATIVE

The Turf Replacement Initiative will be financed with Proposition 1 (Chapter 7, Section 79746) (Prop 1) water use efficiency funds. Prop 1 funding will leverage other regional and local lawn conversion programs, which will contribute to the overall program cost share. This will allow the program to reach a wide portion of the state while still recognizing the priority of funding going to underserved and disadvantaged communities. DWR will track all participation and will report the outcomes of the program to the Drought Task Force and the public.

The \$25 million budget is expected to support the conversion of over 10 million square feet of turf, achieving approximately 20 percent of the statewide goal of replacing 50 million square feet of turf. The statewide public information campaign is expected to generate substantially more water savings. DWR will encourage local agency participation, not only in the Residential Turf Rebate and CII programs, but also in the Statewide Campaign.

Of the total \$25 million allocated to the Turf Replacement Initiative, \$10 million will be directed toward residential rebates in specified underserved, drought-stricken communities in the San Joaquin Valley (Fresno, Kern, King, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare and Tuolumne counties shown in Figure 1), \$12 million will be distributed as residential rebates statewide, and \$3 million will go toward the CII program in partnership with the CCC. DWR will allocate at least 50 percent of the underserved total rebate funding (\$11 million) to disadvantaged communities (DAC) both in the designated San Joaquin Valley counties and statewide. Non-DAC rebates will be capped at \$11 million.

Table 1
Turf Replacement Initiative Budgets

Program	Funding Source	Overall Budget	Budget Breakdown	Targeted Area
1. Residential Rebates	Prop 1	\$25M	\$10M	Targeted San Joaquin Valley Counties
			\$12M	Non-Targeted California Counties
2. CII Direct Installs with CCC	Prop 1*		\$3M	Targeted San Joaquin Valley Counties
3. Statewide Campaign	Drought General Fund	TBD	NA	Statewide (support for workshops, messaging, media, community events, etc.)
<i>*CCC may also be able to contribute some drought funds. Funds may be reallocated as needed.</i>				

PUBLIC OUTREACH

A public meeting and webinar on DWR's Turf Replacement Initiative will be held on Thursday, July 2, 2015 at 1:00 P.M. Other workshops, webinars, e-mails, and website communications will be conducted throughout the summer to inform interested participants. To the extent possible, these communications will be integrated as part of the Statewide Turf Initiative. DWR has developed a website dedicated to this program along with an e-mail sign-up through the Department's mail list. An agency participation sign up will be available at <http://www.water.ca.gov/turf/>.

SCHEDULE

Key milestones of the program schedule are:

- June to mid-July
 - Conduct lawn conversion workshops.
- July – mid-August
 - Continue lawn conversion workshops.
 - EGIA Vendor completes necessary application programming and websites.
- August
 - Continue lawn conversion workshops.
 - Begin accepting rebate applications.
 - Launch CII direct install program in partnership with the CCC.

ATTACHMENT A

PROPOSED TURF REPLACEMENT SPECIFICATIONS

Following are the proposed landscape specifications for the State rebate and CII programs.

Rebate amount and cap

- The state program will rebate \$2 per square foot of turf removed with a cap of 1000 square feet for a maximum rebate of \$2,000 per household.
- Customers of local water agencies that offer lawn conversion rebate programs as well as those who do not have local programs are eligible for a rebate from the state program, as long as they meet the state specifications.
- The state rebates will be awarded on a first-come-first-serve basis within the targeted and non-targeted regions while meeting the goal of 50 percent going to people in disadvantaged communities.

Condition of turf subject to rebate

- Turf may be living or dead at the time of application for a refund. Bare earth areas with no sign of turf are not eligible.
- The turf must still be in place at the time of application for the rebate to be approved.

Method of turf removal and disposal

- This program will not specify the method of turf removal. Lawn removal methods that can be used under this program include sheet mulching, mechanical removal, solarization or other methods determined necessary.

Confirmation of authority to receive rebate, status of landscape before and after conversion

- An on-line application form must be completed and approved for the rebate prior to the initiation of work and reservation of funds. Once work is completed, an on-line claim is submitted for review and approval of the rebate. Five 'before' (submitted at the time of the application) and five 'after' photos of the landscape must be submitted before reimbursement. EGIA will provide the rebate customer with a mobile phone application that includes a geographical verification feature to assist with submitting photos.
- The most recent water bill for the property must be submitted as proof of service within the designated area.
- By entering the property address during the application process, EGIA will use the DWR Disadvantaged Community identification tool to indicate if the property is in a disadvantaged designated area. Recipients must provide a self-certified statement indicating whether other rebates are being received and if so, the amount.

Plants

- The rebated portion of the converted landscapes may only include low water use, drought-tolerant, or California native plants. The *Water Use Classification of Landscape Species* list (<http://ucanr.edu/sites/WUCOLS/>) or local plant lists may be used to make this selection.
- One exception is that the rebated portion of the converted landscape may also include food-producing trees, shrubs, vines, and perennial plants.
- At least one tree, existing or new, must be incorporated into the converted landscape.
- Live or synthetic turf is not allowed in the rebated portion of the converted landscape.

Irrigation

- Requires drip irrigation, micro-spray irrigation, or hand watering.

Coverage of exposed soil surfaces

- Requires mulch on all exposed soil surfaces. Mulch includes organic material, rock, or decomposed granite.

Hardscapes / Permeability

- Impervious decks or patios are not allowed as part of the rebated converted landscape.
- Structures such as outbuildings or sheds are not allowed as part of the rebated footage of the converted landscape.
- Paving stones, pavers, and brick patios are permitted, but must be filled with loose sand. No concrete or impermeable grouting may be used to affix the pavers in place.

Time limit

- Turf removal and landscape conversion must be completed within 90 days of application approval. Extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

Elements recommended, but not required, for inclusion in re-landscaping planning

- Rain barrels
- Graywater systems
- Downspouts redirecting water into landscaped areas, swales or rain gardens to capture storm water
- Smart irrigation controllers
- Pressure regulators and filters on drip and micro-spray irrigation systems
- Converted landscapes must be designed so that when mature, it is anticipated that at least 50% of the rebated portion of the landscape will consist of plants.
- Minimizing the use of herbicides, but acknowledges that use of them may be needed in difficult cases.
- Methods that allow for removed turf to remain onsite instead of being removed and sent to a landfill.